

BEFORE THE ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

In the Matter of

**HELEN E. WATT, M.D.**

Holder of License No. 22016  
For the Practice of Allopathic Medicine  
In the State of Arizona

Case No. MD-07-0928A

**CONSENT AGREEMENT FOR  
LETTER OF REPRIMAND**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

By mutual agreement and understanding, between the Arizona Medical Board ("Board") and Helen E. Watt, M.D. ("Respondent"), the parties agree to the following disposition of this matter.

1. Respondent has read and understands this Consent Agreement and the stipulated Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Order ("Consent Agreement"). Respondent acknowledges that she has the right to consult with legal counsel regarding this matter.

2. By entering into this Consent Agreement, Respondent voluntarily relinquishes any rights to a hearing or judicial review in state or federal court on the matters alleged, or to challenge this Consent Agreement in its entirety as issued by the Board, and waives any other cause of action related thereto or arising from said Consent Agreement.

3. This Consent Agreement is not effective until approved by the Board and signed by its Executive Director.

4. The Board may adopt this Consent Agreement or any part thereof. This Consent Agreement, or any part thereof, may be considered in any future disciplinary action against Respondent.

5. This Consent Agreement does not constitute a dismissal or resolution of other matters currently pending before the Board, if any, and does not constitute any waiver,

1 express or implied, of the Board's statutory authority or jurisdiction regarding any other  
2 pending or future investigation, action or proceeding. The acceptance of this Consent  
3 Agreement does not preclude any other agency, subdivision or officer of this State from  
4 instituting other civil or criminal proceedings with respect to the conduct that is the subject  
5 of this Consent Agreement.

6 6. All admissions made by Respondent are solely for final disposition of this  
7 matter and any subsequent related administrative proceedings or civil litigation involving  
8 the Board and Respondent. Therefore, said admissions by Respondent are not intended  
9 or made for any other use, such as in the context of another state or federal government  
10 regulatory agency proceeding, civil or criminal court proceeding, in the State of Arizona or  
11 any other state or federal court.

12 7. Upon signing this agreement, and returning this document (or a copy thereof) to  
13 the Board's Executive Director, Respondent may not revoke the acceptance of the  
14 Consent Agreement. Respondent may not make any modifications to the document. Any  
15 modifications to this original document are ineffective and void unless mutually approved  
16 by the parties.

17 8. If the Board does not adopt this Consent Agreement, Respondent will not  
18 assert as a defense that the Board's consideration of this Consent Agreement constitutes  
19 bias, prejudice, prejudgment or other similar defense.

20 9. This Consent Agreement, once approved and signed, is a public record that will  
21 be publicly disseminated as a formal action of the Board and will be reported to the  
22 National Practitioner Data Bank and to the Arizona Medical Board's website.

23 10. If any part of the Consent Agreement is later declared void or otherwise  
24 unenforceable, the remainder of the Consent Agreement in its entirety shall remain in force  
25 and effect.

Feb-23-08

04:28pm

From-TOLSON JANTSCHBAKKE

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7-030 P.008/012 F-100

11. Any violation of this Consent Agreement constitutes unprofessional conduct and may result in disciplinary action. A.R.S. § § 32-1401(27)(r) ("violating a formal order, probation, consent agreement or stipulation issued or entered into by the board or its executive director under this chapter") and 32-1451.

Helen E. Watt, M.D.  
HELEN E. WATT, M.D.

DATED: 3/6/09

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The Board is the duly constituted authority for the regulation and control of the practice of allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.

2. Respondent is the holder of license number 22016 for the practice of allopathic medicine in the State of Arizona.

3. The Board initiated case number MD-07-0928A after review of medical records pursuant to a Board Order in case MD-03-1019A. Board Staff reviewed medical records of two patients and found deviations in both records.

4. On October 10, 2006, a fifty-one year-old female patient ("JC") presented to Respondent with chronic fatigue. Respondent ordered several labs and documented a limited physical exam. Respondent diagnosed JB with chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia and recommended JC monitor her basal body temperature. At a follow up visit, Respondent diagnosed JC with hypothyroidism and started her on Armour. There was no documented physical exam. On January 4, 2007, JC reported anxiety and fluttering. Respondent recommended the addition of Triiodothyronine (T3) based on JC's basal body temperature and instructed JC to increase the T3 as needed. On January 19, 2007, Respondent allowed JC to choose how she would dose the Armour and T3. Again there were no documented physical exams for these visits and thyroid testing was not repeated, including a thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) test to monitor JC's hypothyroidism.

5. On October 10, 2006, a seventy-eight year-old female patient ("RD"); presented to Respondent for an evaluation. Respondent ordered several labs. On October 31, 2006, RD returned for a follow up visit and to discuss the labs. Respondent diagnosed RD with hypothyroidism; however, there was no documented physical exam and past medical, social or family history in the record. There also was no documented plan for

1 further lab tests. Additionally, Respondent's progress notes were illegible and confusing  
2 due to non-standard abbreviations.

3 6. The standard of care requires a physician to perform a physical exam  
4 tailored to the patient's complaint at each visit and to order appropriate labs that will be  
5 useful to aid in the diagnosis, treatment or monitoring of a patient. The standard of care  
6 also requires a physician to monitor hypothyroidism by requesting an initial TSH test and  
7 to re-check the TSH level eight weeks after a dose adjustment of thyroid medication.

8 7. Respondent deviated from the standard of care because she did not perform  
9 physical exams on multiple visits for JC and RD and she inappropriately ordered labs that  
10 were not required to diagnose fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome for JC.  
11 Respondent also did not re-check JC's TSH eight weeks after adjusting her thyroid  
12 medication.

13 8. Failing to perform appropriate physical exams may lead to misdiagnosis or a  
14 missed diagnosis and with RD reporting a change in bowel habits, there was a potential to  
15 miss an infection, malignancy or other bowel pathology. Additionally, adjusting medications  
16 for thyroidism based on body basal temperature may lead to iatrogenic hyperthyroidism  
17 with increased risks of cardiac arrhythmia, anxiety and osteoporosis.

18 9. A physician is required to maintain adequate legible medical records  
19 containing, at a minimum, sufficient information to identify the patient, support the  
20 diagnosis, justify the treatment, accurately document the results, indicate advice and  
21 cautionary warnings provided to the patient and provide sufficient information for another  
22 practitioner to assume continuity of the patient's care at any point in the course of  
23 treatment. A.R.S. § 32-1401(2). Respondent's records were inadequate because she did  
24 not document a physical exam and repeat thyroid testing and her progress notes were  
25 illegible and confusing.

1 CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

2 1. The Board possesses jurisdiction over the subject matter hereof and over  
3 Respondent.

4 2. The conduct and circumstances described above constitute unprofessional  
5 conduct pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-1401 (27)(e) ("[f]ailing or refusing to maintain adequate  
6 records on a patient.") and A.R.S. § 32-1401(27)(q) ("[a]ny conduct or practice that is or  
7 might be harmful or dangerous to the health of the patient or the public.").

8 ORDER

9 IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

10 1. Respondent is issued a Letter of Reprimand.

11 2. This Order is the final disposition of case number MD-07-0928A.

12 ISSUED AND EFFECTIVE this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2009.



13 ARIZONA MEDICAL BOARD

14 By

15   
16 Lisa S. Wynn  
Executive Director

17 ORIGINAL of the foregoing filed  
18 this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2009 with:

19 Arizona Medical Board  
20 9545 E. Doubletree Ranch Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

21 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed  
22 this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2009 to:

23 Sarah L. Sato  
24 Olson, Jantsch & Bakker  
7243 North 16th Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85020

25 EXECUTED COPY of the foregoing mailed  
this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of April, 2009 to:

1 Helen E. Watt, M.D.  
2 Address of Record

3   
4 Investigational Review